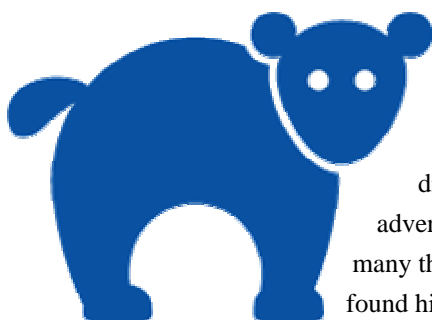




A learning journey

Using ELLI characters to build learning power with children

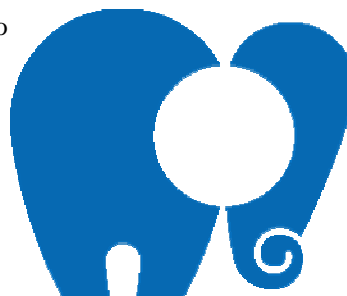


A bear once set out on a long journey. He wanted to find a new cave to make into his home. He had heard that there were some in the mountains he could see in the distance. He knew that there would be many adventures on the way and that there would be many things that he would have to learn before he found his new cave.

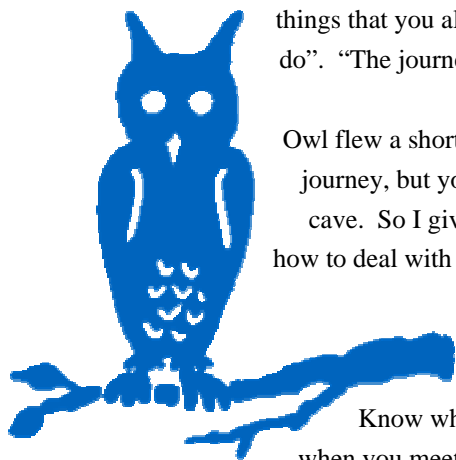
Bear talked to his good friend ELLI about his idea. She offered to introduce him to several of her friends who could help Bear with his learning.

“You need to speak to my friend wise owl,” said Elli.

She will fly high in the sky and look to see how far we have to travel. She can see the best route to follow and the dangers that we might meet.



Wise owl flew down to talk to Bear and Elli. “I have looked at the journey and there are some dangers on the way” she said. “You will need to take with you all the things that you already know and remember all the things you can already do”. “The journey is quite long. It will take you several days.



Owl flew a short distance away and said “I can’t come with you on the journey, but you will need the skills that I have in order to find your new cave. So I give you a gift. I give to you the ability to plan, to know how to deal with each danger on your journey and how to get over the obstacles and roadblocks. The most important part of my gift to you, however, is the ability to know yourself. Listen to your heart and your feelings.

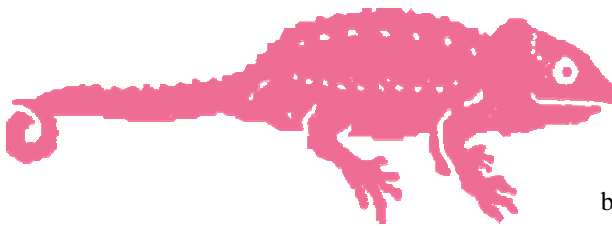
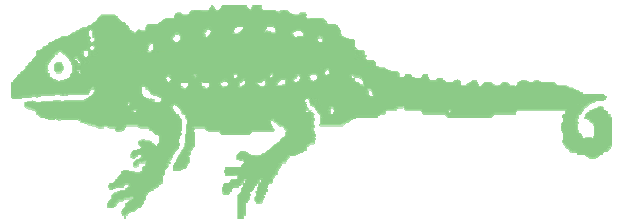
Know what you like best when you are learning and use those when you meet difficulties and dangers. Then you will succeed in finding a beautiful cave to make into your home.”

Wise owl flew away and Bear watched her become a speck in the sky and then disappear from sight. “Do you think that we will be able to find a new cave?” She asked Elli?

“If we use the gifts that wise owl gave us then I am sure that we will succeed” said Elli “Though there is another friend who might be able to help us. I am going to call Chameleon to see what he says.”

“Chameleon!”

And Bear suddenly noticed that sitting on a nearby tree was a Chameleon. He hadn’t noticed the creature before because he looked the same colour as the leaves on the tree.



But now that he wanted to be seen, he had turned red and Bear could see him sat on a branch, peeping out from behind a large green, shiny leaf.

“We are going on a journey to find a cave that Bear can make into his new home.” Elli told Chameleon. “You are so good at adapting to new situations that I wondered what advice you could give us.”

“You need to believe that you can change and grow to learn the things that you need to know at every stage of your journey.”

“I am never stuck.” “No matter what happens, I can change my colour and adapt myself to new situations. I will give you the gift of always being able to change and learn for your journey.”

As Bear and Elli watched the Chameleon, he slowly disappeared. He became impossible to see against the background of the tree and all they could hear was his voice saying “Remember to believe in yourself. There is always a way round or over the dangers of your journey and you can always change and learn new ways of tackling problems.”

By this time Bear and Elli thought that they had enough gifts to begin their journey. They started to walk together down the rugged track heading towards the mountains. As they companionably strode along together they said “We can do it. We will find a beautiful new cave in the mountains.”

After several hours they were tired and thirsty. It didn’t feel so easy to find the cave or even to reach the mountains. They began to feel discouraged and to drag their feet. Bear wanted to turn round and go home.

“It’s too hard a journey” he said.

“But remember what Chameleon told us,” Elli reminded him, “We must believe that we can grow and learn and find the things that we need to complete the journey. What we need is some water and something to eat. Then we will feel better.”

They noticed the sound of running water over to the right and left the path to look for it. In a few hundred meters they found a small, clear, bubbling brook flowing merrily over rocks and boulders. Next to the brook was a fruit tree laden with large, ripe, red apples.

They drank deeply from the stream and made their way back to the path munching contentedly on an apple apiece. They felt good again, knowing that they had a bag full of fruit for the next time they felt hungry.

Bear and Elli continued on their way and in a couple of hours they found themselves on the edge of deep, wide, fast flowing river. It was far too big to jump over and much too dangerous to swim across.

“What shall we do?” asked Bear.

“I don’t know.” Elli replied. “Crossing this river is not just a case of believing we can. We need some more help and I know just the person to ask.”

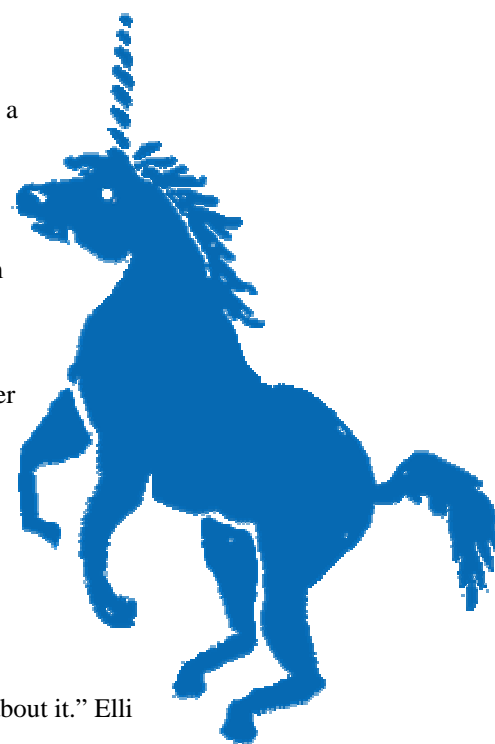
She explained that the person who had the skill to help them was a magical creature called Unicorn. Unicorn was full of imagination and could think of creative ways to tackle any problem. She was sure to know how to cross the river. After several calls, a beautiful, majestic unicorn flew into the sky. She swooped down to make a graceful landing next to Bear and Elli.

What did you call me for?” She asked in a rich, melodious voice.

“We have to cross this river and we don’t know how to go about it.” Elli replied while Bear looked solemnly on.

“What you need is the gift of creativity and imagination,” said Unicorn. “I can give you this to help you to think of new ways of going about problems.

“Thank you.” Bear and Elli replied as they reached out to receive Unicorn’s gift. As they watched the beautiful creature lift off the ground and into the sky, they were filled with wonder that such a magnificent friend could give them a gift that would enable them to think of a way to cross the river.



“Shall we make a raft?” Bear suggested, “Or would a bridge be better?”

“I was thinking of a hot air balloon,” Elli replied, “or maybe a dug-out canoe.”

“There are too many choices,” said Bear. “Let’s choose one and see if it works.”

“OK.” agreed Elli “let’s try the raft. There are plenty of fallen branches around here and we can use vines to tie them together. I bet it won’t take long.”

Elli was right. It didn’t take long to put together a raft and to launch it into the water. As they stepped from the shore onto the floating wooden craft, the vines gave way and the tree branches separated, each bobbing off down stream in the strong current of the river.

“Now what are we going to do?” Bear wailed. “We thought we were so clever and now our raft has become just a load of branches floating in the river.”

“I think we need to call on another of my friends,” said Elli. “We need a little more help so that we don’t lose heart and give up.”



Elli raised her trunk and gave a long call. They waited on the riverbank and after what seemed like a very long time, a tortoise came into view, shuffling its steady way through the undergrowth.

Hello Tortoise.” Elli called.

“Bear and I are trying to get across this river. We made a raft to sail across the river, but it fell apart as soon as we launched it. What are we to do?”

“Well” said Tortoise. “What you need is some of my persistence. I am such a slow creature that I have had to learn to keep going long after everyone else has given up.”

“Some people call this skill ‘stick ability’ and others call it resilience. Whatever you call it, this is the gift that enables me to doggedly keep trying, even when I find something very hard. I have learned to not mind when my quick friends can do things fast because I have discovered that when they get stuck they often give up. I go slowly, but I keep going even when it is very hard work.”

“If you want to get across this river by using a raft, you will need to keep trying. So I give you my gift of resilience. Use it wisely and you will definitely succeed.”

As Tortoise ambled off into the shrubs beside the path, Bear and Elli looked at one another. They remembered all the other gifts they’d received.

Chameleon gave them the gift of always being able to learn and change.

Wise Owl gave them the ability to see ahead and know what was coming.


Unicorn gave them the gift of creativity and imagination.


And Tortoise gave them the gift of being able to keep trying even when things did not work out or they were left behind by their faster friends.

Surely using all these gifts they would be able to get across the river. They sat down to think. They took Chameleon's gift and believed that they had all that they needed to get across the river, even if it had proved difficult so far. They remembered Owl's ability to get into the air and see the whole journey and they thought about making the raft from her vantage place. They took strength from Tortoise's stickability and used Unicorn's creativity and imagination. They planned how many branches to use and how to make the vines stronger so that the raft held together.

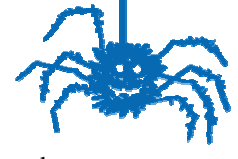
At the end of a few hours, the new craft was ready. It looked splendid in the afternoon sun and they were sure that this time it would carry them safely across the river. They launched it into the water, jumped aboard and steered their way across the current to the opposite bank where they leapt ashore.

As dusk began to draw in the weary travellers found themselves once again blocked. This time there was a big ravine between them and the mountains they so wanted to reach. They looked at one another in dismay. Chameleon had been so certain that they had everything they needed in order to complete the journey, but surely he had not known about the ravine.

 No amount of Tortoise's persistence would get them across a ravine this wide and deep so what were they going to do? They thought of Unicorn and her creativity. What would she have done here? How could her gift help them to cross to the other side?

 Elli stopped and thought for a while then she said. "I think I should introduce you to two more of my friends. They are both very good at learning and between them they can always come up with a solution to even the hardest problem." They are called Curious Cat and Web-weaving Spider."

Elli called "Curious Cat where are you? Web-spinning spider, are you around?"

 Suddenly both a cat and a spider came into view. The cat crept down a nearby tree and stretched lazily on the ground in front of them before sitting up and slowly cleaning her paws. The spider dropped fast on a silken thread and stopped just in front of their eyes, twisting round and round as he hung in the dusky air.

Elli turned to talk to both of them. “We are trying to get to the mountains so that Bear can find a cave to make a splendid new home. We have come a long way but now we find ourselves at this ravine and we don’t know how to get across it.

The cat stretched again and then said, “You must be more curious about the problem. If you ask all the right questions you will find out exactly how big the problem is and then you will be able to use Unicorn’s gift of creativity to find a way of solving it.”

“Ask as many questions as you can so that you collect together information about the problem. But you mustn’t just ask easy questions such as

‘How wide is the ravine’ and

‘How deep is it?’

You must also ask more difficult questions such as

‘Is there any other way to the mountain other than by crossing this ravine?’

‘Has anyone ever crossed this ravine before?’

‘How did they do it?’

‘Has anyone crossed other ravines like this one?’

And many, many more questions until you know that you have got to the bottom of the problem and can begin to find a way of solving it.”

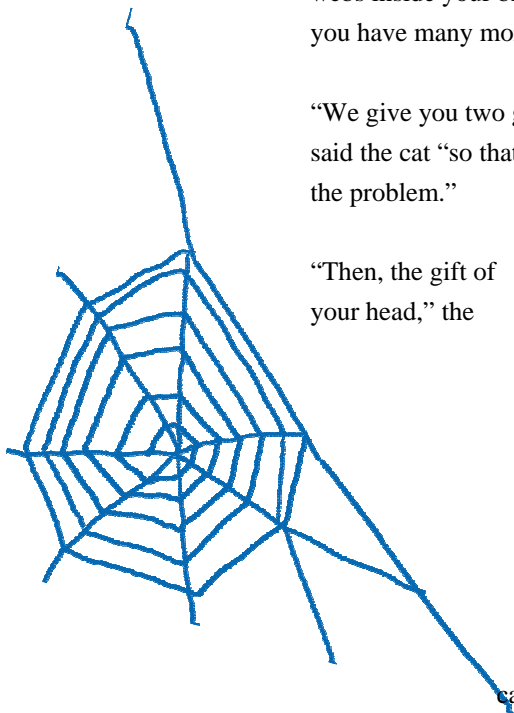
“Not only that,” interrupted the spider “you also need to link ideas together to make webs inside your brain just like my spider’s web. “If you link ideas together then you have many more ideas to draw on than the ones you have for this problem.”

“We give you two gifts,” said Cat and Spider together. “First, the gift of curiosity,” said the cat “so that you can ask many questions and get to the bottom of the problem.”

“Then, the gift of your head,” the spider added.

Bear and Elli were really pleased with these new gifts and sat down to plan what to do next. They used the creativity of Unicorn to devise a cunning plan.

They decided to collect all the spider’s webs that Spider had left over the trees at the side of the ravine. It took them several hours and much of the stick ability Tortoise had given them to weave the strong, light webs into a huge catapult. They set up the catapult next to the ravine and were all



set to be thrown across it when they realized that they needed some more help.

“We need the last of my friends” said Elli. “Let me call the Bees. They are good at working in a team.” The individual bees go out to collect pollen then they bring it back to the hive where everyone works together to make the honey.”



When Elli called the bees they came in a big swarm. Elli explained that they needed help in getting across the ravine with their newly built catapult.

The bees agreed to help. “First we give you a gift” they said. “We give you the ability to work as we do. To know when to work on your own such as when we go to look for flowers that are full of pollen. And the ability to work as a team.”

“Thank you” said Bear and Elli. We will treasure these gifts. Before you go, however can you help us by pulling back the catapult so that we are sent across the ravine one at a time. The bees called their friends and they worked as a single bee, pulling all at once so that

the catapult was stretched as far as it would go. Bear went first. He sat in the catapult and the bees let go. Bear flew through the air and landed with a bump on the other side of the ravine. The bees began to pull the catapult back again and Elli took her turn. As the bees let go, Elli sailed across the ravine and fell in a heap next to Bear. The bees gathered themselves together into a swarm and waved goodbye as they flew away.

Bear and Elli picked themselves up and decided to spend the rest of the night on the side of the ravine before starting off again on their journey towards the mountain. It had been a long day. They had made so many good friends and learned so much. They were ready for a rest and as they settled down for the night, they remembered all the gifts that Elli’s friends had given them.

The belief that they can always grow and learn from Chameleon

Resilience and stick ability so that they could keep trying from Tortoise

The ability to map the journey and plan their route before beginning from Owl

Imagination and creativity was given by Unicorn

Curiosity from Cat

Making webs of meaning from Spider

Working alone and in teams from Bees.

They were so rich in gifts that they went to sleep content knowing that when they woke up the next day they had everything they needed to get to the mountain and find that beautiful cave for Bear's new home.